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LETTER DATED 15 JANUARY 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ETHIOPIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to attach for your kind attention a letter from Mr. Seyoum Mesfin, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, concerning false accusations made recently by the Sudan against Ethiopia in a desperate attempt to divert the attention of the Security Council, which has before it information from my Government concerning Sudanese involvement in the foiled assassination attempt directed at His Excellency President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

I wish to request the circulation of the present letter and the enclosed letter from my Foreign Minister (see annex) as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mulugeta ETEFFA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 15 January 1996 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia addressed to the President of the Security Council

I wish to refer to the letter dated 12 January 1996 addressed to you by the Foreign Minister of the Sudan calling for an urgent meeting of the Security Council to look into the alleged aggression by Ethiopia against the Sudan (S/1996/29, annex).

I wish to assure you that this latest antic by the Government of the Sudan has not surprised us at all because it falls within the same pattern of Sudanese attempts to divert attention from the request that we have put to the Security Council to look into Sudanese involvement in the assassination attempt against His Excellency President Hosni Mubarak on 26 June 1995 in Addis Ababa.

It is to be noted that when the Government of Ethiopia, out of frustration at Sudanese unwillingness to cooperate with Ethiopia over the extradition of the three terrorists, decided to take the matter to the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the line initially adopted by the Sudan was that the Central Organ of OAU had no mandate to be seized with the issue. The OAU Secretary-General and the secretariat were criticized by the Sudanese and insinuations were made by the Sudan that OAU was not being impartial.

When Ethiopia finally decided to take the issue to the Security Council, however, the Sudan changed tack and began to argue this time that the matter should not be handled by the Council because, according to the new line, doing so would undermine OAU. The letter by the Sudanese Foreign Minister addressed to the Secretary-General of OAU on 28 December - seven days after Ethiopia had briefed the Security Council in an informal setting - falls into the same pattern of diversionary tactics being adopted by the Sudan. The letter addressed to the Secretary-General of OAU was essentially prepared for the Security Council even though the addressee was the Secretary-General of OAU.

The Sudanese invitation to OAU to send a fact-finding mission is a gimmick meant to create the impression that the Sudan is enthusiastically cooperating with OAU. The Sudanese have not, in this regard, been beyond fabricating stories, like attributing to the Secretary-General of OAU statements that he never made.

Now the Sudanese have a new story to tell and this time the new Sudanese gimmick focuses on the alleged aggression launched by Ethiopia against the Sudan. This is nothing but an insult to the intelligence of members of the Security Council. To believe that Ethiopia would engage in such an activity against the Sudan at the same time as it is appealing to the Security Council to take up the issue of Sudanese involvement in State-sponsored terrorism would require one to assume, among other things, that Ethiopians have a very bad sense of timing. Why now? is the first question that should be posed. Why should Ethiopia engage in such an adventure now? But, on the other hand, the Sudan has every reason now to talk about aggression by Ethiopia.

The Sudan has been trying to run away from the charge of State-sponsored terrorism brought against it by Ethiopian investigators into the assassination attempt against President Mubarak. Sudanese authorities have left no stone unturned in their attempt to divert attention from the crime committed by their security organs. They will continue to fabricate other stories in the belief that they may prevent the Security Council from calling on the Sudan to comply with the OAU demand that it hand over to Ethiopia the three terrorists being sheltered in the Sudan.

Ethiopia, of course, has every reason to view this latest Sudanese fabrication as a further provocation, coming as it does after the crime committed by the Sudan in Addis Ababa against an African Head of State.

Ethiopia would not believe for a moment that the Security Council would take seriously the letter dated 12 January 1996 addressed by the Foreign Minister of the Sudan to you. The Sudanese motive requires no great effort to understand. For the Sudanese authorities the transformation of the grave charge brought against them into bilateral altercation and bilateral conflict between Ethiopia and the Sudan would be a major success. Ethiopia would not allow this to happen, nor should the Security Council.

(Signed) Seyoum MESFIN
Minister for Foreign Affairs of
the Federal Democratic Republic
of Ethiopia